

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge that the Office Action dated January 15, 2003 has been made final. Accordingly, a Request for Continued Examination has been submitted concurrently herewith, together with the appropriate fee. Applicants request, therefore, that the foregoing amendment be entered, and that this application be further considered in light of the matters set forth hereinafter.

Claims 1, 4, 12-15 and 17-21 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Balling et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,397,545) in view of Pratt et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,132,895) and Balachandran et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,723,074). In addition, Claims 2 and 3 have been rejected as unpatentable over the same references and further in view of Farooque et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,200,696), while Claim 5 has been rejected as unpatentable over the same three references, and further in view of Lee et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,168,703). Finally, Claims 16-22 have been rejected as unpatentable over Balling et al, Pratt et al and Balachandran et al as noted previously, and further in view of Tsuji et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,425,315).

By the foregoing amendment, Applicants have cancelled Claims 1-5 and 12-22 previously pending herein and submitted new Claims 23-47 in place thereof. Applicants respectfully submit that the latter new claims distinguish

over the previously cited references, for reasons previously made of record in the amendment submitted November 6, 2002.

In addition, Applicants note that, in the reactor shown in Figure 2 of Balling et al, the gas simply flows through the channels 34 and is progressively reacted as it moves downward until it exits the channels at the bottom. Accordingly, there is no reason to incorporate a porous material, such as disclosed in Balachandran et al and the Balling et al structure, nor is there any apparent manner in which that could easily be done, without fundamental alteration of the Balling et al apparatus. Moreover, the reference in the outstanding Office Action to "the catalyst material of the layers" in Balachandran et al is believed to be inapt, in that, while Balachandran et al does disclose the use of gas permeable materials in the core structure 17a-17c, it does not include a stack of such core structures. Rather, the respective cores 17 are supported and spaced apart in a housing formed by a gas impermeable support 57, as well as by top and bottom structures 22 and 12, so that a gas stream may flow between them in a direction transverse to the flow of gases in the channels 13 (perpendicular to the plane of the drawing in Figure 2). Accordingly, alternating first and second catalyst layers as recited in Claim 23, or a stack of porous catalyst layers, as recited in Claim 25 are not disclosed. Furthermore, none of the cited references discloses the method defined in Claims 33 and 41 in which respective peripheral edge regions of catalyst layers are sealed to form a substantially gas-tight edge seal.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

It is respectfully requested that, if necessary to effect a timely response, this paper be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response and shortages in other fees, be charged, or any overpayment in fees be credited, to the Deposit Account of Crowell & Moring LLP, Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #1748X/49133).

Respectfully submitted,

  
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